

- 1 1. A method comprising:
2 enabling a component to connect to a network
3 through a software layer; and
4 using the layer to accommodate at least two
5 different types of network connections.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein enabling a
2 component to connect to a network includes enabling a
3 component to connect through an interface to the Internet.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 including using the layer
2 to accommodate for a dial up connection and a digital
3 subscriber line.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 including allowing at least
2 two components to use a connection to the Internet at the
3 same time, determining when both components have released
4 the connection and discontinuing the connection when both
5 components have released the connection.
- 1 5. A method comprising:
2 allowing at least two software clients to use a
3 connection to the Internet at the same time;
4 determining when both clients have released the
5 connection; and

6 discontinuing the connection when both clients
7 have released the connection.

1 6. The method of claim 5 including enabling said
2 clients to connect to the Internet through a software layer
3 and using the layer to accommodate at least two different
4 types of Internet connections.

1 7. The method of claim 5 including monitoring the
2 connection so that the connection is not released until all
3 clients using the connection have released the connection.

1 8. The method of claim 5 including monitoring the
2 connection for a connection failure.

1 9. The method of claim 5 including receiving a
2 request from a client for a connection and determining
3 whether a connection has already been established.

1 10. The method of claim 5 including providing a state
2 machine having a busy state when the connection is being
3 used by a client and an idle state when the connection is
4 not being used by a client.

1 11. An article comprising a medium storing
2 instructions that enable a processor-based system to:

3 enable a component to connect to a network
4 through a software layer; and
5 use the layer to accommodate at least two
6 different types of network connections.

1 12. The article of claim 11 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to
3 enable a component to connect through an interface to the
4 Internet.

1 13. The article of claim 11 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to use
3 the layer to accommodate for a dial up connection and a
4 digital subscriber line.

1 14. The article of claim 11 further storing
2 instructions to enable the processor-based system to allow
3 at least two components to use a connection to the Internet
4 at the same time, determine when both components have
5 released the connection and discontinue the connection when
6 both components have released the connection.

1 15. An article comprising a medium storing
2 instructions that enable a processor-based system to:
3 allow at least two software clients to use a
4 connection to the Internet at the same time;

5 determine when both clients have released the
6 connection; and

7 discontinue the connection when both clients have
8 released the connection.

1 16. The article of claim 15 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to
3 enable the clients to connect to the Internet through a
4 software layer and use the layer to accommodate at least
5 two different types of Internet connections.

1 17. The article of claim 15 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to
3 monitor the connection so that the connection is not
4 released until all clients using the connection have
5 released the connection.

1 18. The article of claim 15 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to
3 monitor the connection for a connection failure.

1 19. The article of claim 15 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to
3 receive a request from a client for a connection and to
4 determine whether a connection has already been
5 established.

1 20. The article of claim 15 further storing
2 instructions that enable the processor-based system to
3 implement a state machine having a busy state when a
4 connection is being used by the client and an idle state
5 when the connection is not being used by the client.

1 21. A system comprising:
2 a processor;
3 a network interface coupled to said processor;
4 and
5 a storage storing instructions that enable the
6 system to enable a component to connect to a network
7 through a software layer and use the layer to accommodate
8 at least two different types of network connections.

1 22. The system of claim 21 wherein the storage stores
2 instructions that enable the component to connect through
3 an interface to the Internet.

1 23. The system of claim 21 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions to enable the processor to use the
3 layer to accommodate for a dial up connection or a digital
4 subscriber link.

1 24. The system of claim 21 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions that enable the system to allow at
3 least two components to use a connection to the Internet at
4 the same time, determine when both components have released
5 the connection and discontinue the connection when both
6 components have released the connection.

1 25. A system comprising:
2 a processor;
3 an interface to enable a connection to the
4 Internet; and
5 a storage storing instructions that enable at
6 least two software clients to use a connection to the
7 Internet at the same time, determine when both clients have
8 released the connection and discontinue the connection when
9 both clients have released the connection.

1 26. The system of claim 25 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions that enable the client to connect to
3 the Internet through a software layer and use the layer to
4 accommodate at least two different types of Internet
5 connections.

1 27. The system of claim 25 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions to enable the system to monitor the
3 connection so that the connection will not be released

4 until all clients using the connection have released the
5 connection.

1 28. The system of claim 25 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions to monitor the connection for a
3 connection failure.

1 29. The system of claim 25 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions to enable the system to receive a
3 request from a client for a connection and to determine
4 whether a connection has already been established.

1 30. The system of claim 25 wherein said storage
2 stores instructions to implement a state machine having a
3 busy state when a connection is being used by a client and
4 an idle state when the connection is not being used by a
5 client.